# U.S. Army To Release Manned Ground Vehicle Program Results

By KRIS OSBORN, Defense News, 12 October 2009

The U.S. Army plans to release technical advances made during the now-canceled Manned Ground Vehicle program as it challenges industry to develop the Ground Combat Vehicle Infantry Fighting Vehicle (GCV IFV).

The service will emphasize crew survivability, a modular design that will allow the incorporation of lighter composite armor as it becomes available, and deployability, officials said.

“We spent three years and a lot of money developing prototyping. How do we make sure that the goodness of that design is available throughout industry? We are releasing the preliminary design in a body of knowledge, which will allow [industry bidders] to understand where we were,” said Army Col. Bryan McVeigh, the service’s program manager for the Ground Combat Vehicle.

The Army plans to field the GCV IFV by 2017 as the first of a series of vehicle variants, Army and industry officials said. The new vehicle will replace some of the service’s aging fleet of 1960sera M113s, among other platforms, according to the Army’s Ground Combat Vehicle Strategy documents.

“The GCV IFV may then replace selected M113 family of vehicles such as command and control, medical evacuation and mortar carrier, allowing us to begin divestiture of the M113 family of vehicles,” the document states.

The Army has planned industry days for this month and November to release requirements, so bidders can begin drafting specs for a vehicle.

“I am expecting our prime contractors to give me a full industry solution that meets all of my requirements, not just the parts of the requirements that they excel at,” McVeigh said. “We want multiple competitive solutions so we can go into a competitive downselect.” The Army, which has finished drafting its requirements for the new vehicle, will allow industry to come up with the best technological solutions that can meet them. Army planners say they are hoping to push the envelope of technological possibility.

“We are looking for a new start or a modified existing system that can meet all the thresholds, with the potential to grow more,” said Rickey Smith, who directs the Army Capability Integration Center-Forward. “We are looking for growth potential as an operational requirement where industry can show us the incentive and show us the way forward.

“From the operational requirements side, we sometimes overspecify,” Smith said. “We shouldn’t be in the solutions specifics; we should be about what we need it to do. At the same time, we need growth potential.” One possibility is to build a vehicle that can lose weight over time as lighter composites mature.

“Weight is always going to be a consideration, and I think what we are really looking for is a modular vehicle,” said Gen. Peter Chiarelli, the Army’s vice chief of staff. “If you take a look at where we are in certain technologies today, many of your passive armor systems weigh more today than I think they’ll weigh 10 or 20 or 30 years from now, and active protection, albeit in its infancy, will improve over time.” One analyst said removable armor could ameliorate deployability problems.

“There is no question the No. 1 priority of the GCV will be the survivability of the crew. We are probably looking at a vehicle in the 40ton range,” said Loren Thompson, vice president of the Lexington Institute, an Arlington, Va.-based think tank.

“The important question in terms of weight is whether the armor can be easily removed,” Thompson said. “If you can’t take the armor off, you have a major deployability challenge.” ■

Army Times Staff Writer Gina Cavallaro contributed to this report.